

REMARKS

With the entry of the foregoing claim amendments, claims 1-3, 5-7, 10, 13, 16 and 17 are pending in this application. Favorable consideration is requested.

At the outset, applicants note with appreciation that claims 2-3, 5-7 and 17 have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to place the claims in more conventional US patent claim format by specifying that the hydroxyl-modified ethylene- α -olefin copolymer is produced by introducing hydroxyl groups into an ethylene- α -olefin copolymer, and claims 1 and 2 have been amended to replace the negative limitation “without causing cross-linking and degradation of the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer” with the limitation positively specifying the reaction mechanism for introducing hydroxyl groups into the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer. Support for the foregoing amendments can be found in the specification, for example, at page 6, lines 17 to 19; page 7, the second paragraph; page 11, lines 6 to 7; page 15, lines 25 to 27; page 16, lines 2 to 5. No new matter has been added by the claim amendments.

The reaction mechanism including hydrogen abstraction can efficiently introduce hydroxyl groups into an ethylene- α -olefin copolymer and can minimize or prevent cross-linking and degradation of the ethylene- α -olefin copolymer (starting material). The references cited in both the current Office Action and the former Office Actions do not disclose or suggest the combination of the claimed limitations of claim 1. The same is true for independent claim 2.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 10, 13 and 16 have been rejected as being allegedly anticipated by WO 03/078487. Applicants request the withdrawal of this rejection for at least the following reasons.

The cited reference, WO 03/078487, was published on September 2003. The claimed invention claims priority to JP2002-379025, filed in Japan on December 27, 2002, which is before the publication date of the cited reference, WO 03/078487. The Office Action dated December 9, 2005, correctly acknowledged that a certified copy of the priority document was received from the International Bureau. At this time, applicants provide the attached translation of the priority document, including a statement of accuracy, thereby further perfecting the priority claim. A review of the translated specification reveals that the priority document is substantially equivalent to the present disclosure. As a result, the present invention is entitled to the filing date of the priority document, which is December 27, 2002. Therefore, the cited reference is not prior art, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, and the attached supporting documentation, applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any questions concerning this application, the undersigned may be contacted at 703-816-4009.

Respectfully submitted,

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